

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 2, 4, 29, 30 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kubo et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,295,109).

Claims 3, 5 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kubo et al.

Claims 6-9 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicant cancels claim 6 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amends claims 1, 7, 8 and 29 by this amendment. Accordingly, claims 1-5, 10-12 and 29-32 remain pending, with claims 1-5, 10-12, 29, 30 and 32 being currently under consideration.

The Disposition of the Claims

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 6-9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. While Applicant agrees that these claims are allowable and patentably distinguish over the prior art, Applicant respectfully does not acquiesce that patentability resides only in the features expressed at page 11, line 9 - page 12, line 11 of the Office Action, nor that each and every feature recited in the claims is required for patentability.

To expedite the prosecution of the present application, Applicant cancels claim 6 without prejudice or disclaimer, amends claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6, amends claim 7 to depend from claim 1, and rewrites claim 8 in independent form. Accordingly,

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-5 and 7-9 are in *prima facie* condition for allowance.

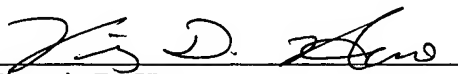
In addition, Applicant amends independent claim 29 to incorporate the subject matter similar to that in claim 6. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the applied reference also fails to teach or suggest claim 29, as newly-amended. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 29, 30 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited. Should there remain any questions or comments regarding this response or the application in general, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,
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